UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/807,679	03/24/2004	Nagesh Kadaba	018360/268388	4421

826 7590 07/01/2008

ALSTON & BIRD LLP
BANK OF AMERICA PLAZA
101 SOUTH TRYON STREET, SUITE 4000
CHARLOTTE, NC 28280-4000

EXAMINER	
VETTER, DANIEL	
ART UNIT	**PAPER NUMBER**
3628	

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
07/01/2008	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/807,679	KADABA, NAGESH	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	DANIEL P. VETTER	3628	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *29 February 2008*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-71* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) *1-32 and 61-71* is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *33-60* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date *See Continuation Sheet*.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

Continuation of Attachment(s) 3). Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08), Paper No(s)/Mail Date :03/24/2004, 07/22/2004, 12/03/2004, 12/06/2004, 06/22/2005, 06/15/2006, 02/08/2008.

DETAILED ACTION

Status of the Claims

1. Claims 1-71 are currently pending in this application.

Election/Restrictions

2. Applicant's election of claims 33-60 in the reply filed on February 29, 2008 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).

3. Claims 1-32 and 61-71 withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

4. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

> Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

5. Claims 46-53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

4. Claims 46-53 are directed to a series of steps. In order for a series of steps to be considered a proper process under § 101, a claimed process should either: (1) be tied to another statutory class (such as a particular apparatus) or (2) transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or materials). *Diamond v. Diehr*, 450 U.S. 175, 184 (1981); *Parker v. Flook*, 437 U.S. 584, 588 n.9 (1978); *Gottschalk v. Benson*, 409 U.S. 63, 70 (1972). Thus, to qualify as patent eligible, these processes must positively recite the other statutory class to which it is tied (e.g., by identifying the apparatus that accomplishes the method steps), or positively recite the subject matter that is being transformed (e.g., by identifying the product or material that is changed to a different

state). While the claims nominally recite certain "systems", they concretely identify neither the apparatus performing the recited steps nor any transformation of underlying materials, and accordingly are directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claims 39-41 and 44-45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

8. Claim 39 recites that the system is configured to compare the electronic billing manifest with the tracking data indicating detection of the package at the consignee address. The scope of the claim is unclear because claim 37, from which claim 39 depends, requires that the tracking data is combined with the billing manifest. In other words, it appears that the system is configured to compare something with itself. Claims 40 and 41 inherit the above deficiency through dependency and, as such, are rejected for the same reasons.

9. Claim 44 is directed to a "system" and therefore not considered a process for the purposes of § 101. However, these claims recite actions or steps as part of the system (e.g., "debiting an amount . . ." and "depositing a remaining amount . . ."). A single claim that claims both an apparatus and the method steps of using the apparatus is indefinite. *IPXL Holdings v. Amazon.com, Inc.*, 430 F.2d 1377, 1384, 77 USPQ2d 1140, 1145 (Fed. Cir. 2005). These claims do not properly apprise the public as to what would constitute infringement (i.e., creation of the claimed system or the act of using it) and accordingly are rejected as vague and indefinite under § 112, second paragraph. Claim 45 inherits the above deficiency through dependency and, as such, is rejected for the same reasons.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

10. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
> (e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

11. Claims 33-35, 46-49, and 54-56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Morimoto, U.S. Pat. No. 7,035,856 (Reference A of the attached PTO-892).

12. As per claim 33, Morimoto teaches a computer system for routing delivery of a package by a plurality of carriers each having one of a plurality of physical delivery systems wherein delivery is requested by a shipper computer system, said computer system comprising:

an initial carrier computer system connected in electronic communication with the carrier physical delivery system of an initial one of the carriers and the shipper computer system (col. 9, lines 1-9), said initial carrier computer system: configured to obtain package information data from the shipper computer system, said package information data including a consignee address (col. 10, lines 22-24); configured to determine whether at least some of the package information data meets a stored condition for single carrier delivery (col. 9, lines 23-29), configured to instruct the initial carrier physical delivery system to deliver one of the packages to the consignee address in response to the single carrier condition being met (col. 10, lines 56-59, col. 11, lines 7-9), and configured to determine an intermediate location at which a subsequent one of the carriers is configured to receive the package in response to the single carrier condition not being met (col. 9, lines 23-26, col. 10, lines 61-63);

and a subsequent carrier computer system connected in communication with the initial carrier computer system and a subsequent one of the carrier physical delivery systems (col. 8, lines 35-40, col. 9, lines 1-9), said subsequent carrier computer system: configured to obtain the package information data, including the consignee address, and the intermediate location from the initial carrier computer system (col. 9, line 48, col. 11, lines 13-17); configured to receive instructions from the initial carrier computer system to receive the package at the intermediate location and complete delivery to the consignee address (col. 9, lines 48-50, col. 11, lines 13-17); and configured to send the package information data, including the consignee address, and the intermediate location to the subsequent carrier physical delivery system and instructing the subsequent carrier delivery system to obtain the package at the intermediate location and complete delivery of the package to the consignee address (col. 11, lines 21-29, 55-63).

13. As per claim 34, Morimoto teaches the system of claim 33 as described above. Morimoto further teaches the package information data includes an initial carrier tracking number (col. 2, line 64) and wherein the initial carrier computer system is configured to communicate with a scanning device of the initial carrier physical delivery system to receive tracking data indicating detection of the initial carrier tracking number at the intermediate location by the scanning device (col. 3, lines 7-12), said initial carrier computer system also configured to electronically notify the subsequent carrier tracking system of arrival of the package at the intermediate location (col. 11, lines 12-27).

14. As per claim 35, Morimoto teaches the system of claim 34 as described above. Morimoto further teaches the package information data also includes a subsequent carrier tracking number (col. 15, lines 3-9) and wherein the subsequent carrier computer system is configured to communicate with a scanning device of the subsequent carrier physical delivery system to receive tracking data indicating detection of the subsequent carrier tracking number at the consignee location (col. 11, lines 37-41), said subsequent carrier computer system configured to notify the first carrier computer system of detection of the subsequent carrier tracking number at the consignee address (col. 11,

lines 24-29). Examiner notes that, in Morimoto, the initial shipping company shares the tracking number with subsequent shipping companies (col. 15, lines 3-15). For all purposes in applying this reference, examiner is interpreting this to disclose an initial and subsequent tracking number, as the claims do not require the numbers to be different from one another.

15. As per claim 46, Morimoto teaches a method of routing delivery of a package by a plurality of carriers each having one of a plurality of physical delivery systems, said method of routing comprising: obtaining package information data, including a consignee address, from a shipper (col. 10, lines 22-24); determining whether at least some of the package information data meets a condition for single carrier delivery (col. 9, lines 23-29); instructing the initial carrier physical delivery system to deliver one of the packages to the consignee address in response to the single carrier condition being met (col. 10, lines 56-59, col. 11, lines 7-9); and determining an intermediate location at which a subsequent one of the carriers is configured to receive the package in response to the single carrier condition not being met (col. 9, lines 23-26, col. 10, lines 61-63).

16. As per claim 47, Morimoto teaches the method of claim 46 as described above. Morimoto further teaches sending the package information data and the intermediate location to the subsequent carrier physical delivery system (col. 10, lines 61-65) and instructing the subsequent carrier physical delivery system to obtain the package at the intermediate location and complete delivery of the package to the consignee address (col. 11, lines 12-17, col. 12, lines 1-2).

17. As per claim 48, Morimoto teaches the method of claim 47 as described above. Morimoto further teaches obtaining the package information data also includes obtaining an initial carrier tracking number (col. 2, line 64) and further comprising obtaining tracking data indicating detection of the initial carrier tracking number at the intermediate location using a scanning device of the initial carrier physical delivery system (col. 3, lines 7-12).

18. As per claim 49, Morimoto teaches the method of claim 48 as described above. Morimoto further teaches notifying the subsequent carrier tracking system of detection of the initial carrier tracking number at the intermediate location (col. 11, lines 24-29).

19. As per claim 54, Morimoto teaches a computer program product for routing delivery of a package, the computer program product comprising a computer-readable storage medium having computer-readable program code portions stored therein (col. 16, lines 33-41), the computer-readable program code portions comprising: a first executable portion for obtaining package information data, including a consignee address, from a shipper computer system (col. 10, lines 22-24); a second executable portion for determining whether at least some of the package information data meets a condition for single carrier delivery (col. 9, lines 23-29); a third executable portion for instructing an initial carrier physical delivery system to deliver one of the packages to the consignee address in response to the single carrier condition being met (col. 10, lines 56-59, col. 11, lines 7-9); and a fourth executable portion for determining an intermediate location at which a subsequent one of the carriers is configured to receive the package in response to the single carrier condition not being met (col. 9, lines 23-26, col. 10, lines 61-63).

20. As per claim 55, Morimoto teaches the product of claim 54 as described above. Morimoto further teaches a fifth executable portion for sending the package information data and the intermediate location to the subsequent carrier physical delivery system (col. 10, lines 61-65) and instructing a subsequent carrier physical delivery system to obtain the package at the intermediate location and complete delivery of the package to the consignee address (col. 11, lines 12-17, col. 12, lines 1-2).

21. As per claim 56, Morimoto teaches the product of claim 55 as described above. Morimoto further teaches a sixth executable portion for obtaining an initial carrier tracking number as part of the package information data (col. 2, line 64) and obtaining tracking data indicating detection of the initial carrier tracking number at the

intermediate location using a scanning device of the initial carrier physical delivery system (col. 3, lines 7-12).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

22. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

23. Claims 36-43, 52-53, and 57-60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Morimoto in view of Delfer, III, U.S. Pat. No. 5,774,885 (Reference 1 of the IDS submitted 02/08/2008).

24. As per claim 36, Morimoto teaches the system of claim 35 as described above. Morimoto further teaches the initial carrier computer system is further configured to combine the package information data with the tracking data indicating detection of the package at the intermediate location into an electronic data file using the initial carrier tracking number (col. 11, lines 24-29; Fig. 4), wherein the initial carrier computer system is configured to bill the subsequent carrier by transmitting the electronic data file to the subsequent carrier computer system (col. 11, lines 12-17, col. 15, lines 15-20). Morimoto does not teach that the data file is a billing manifest; which is taught by Delfer (col. 11, lines 13-20). Since each individual element and its function are shown in the prior art, albeit shown in separate references, the difference between the claimed subject matter and the prior art rests not on any individual element or function but in the very combination itself—that is, in the substitution of the billing manifests in Delfer for the data files used in Morimoto. Both elements share similar purposes and characteristics. It would have been prima facie obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to incorporate billing manifests because it is merely the simple substitution of one known element for another that could be implemented through routine engineering producing predictable results.

25. As per claim 37, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the system of claim 36 as described above. Morimoto further teaches the initial carrier computer system is also configured to combine the tracking data indicating detection of the package at the consignee address with the package information data in the data file using the subsequent carrier tracking number (col. 11, lines 24-27, Fig. 4, col. 15, lines 10-15). Delfer further teaches the data file is a billing manifest as set forth above with respect to claim 36.

26. As per claim 38, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the system of claim 37 as described above. Morimoto further teaches the subsequent carrier computer system is configured to display the data file for audit (col. 11, lines 21-24). Delfer further teaches the data file is a billing manifest as set forth above with respect to claim 36.

27. As per claim 39, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the system of claim 37 as described above. Morimoto further teaches the subsequent carrier computer system is configured to compare the electronic data file with the tracking data indicating detection of the package at the consignee address to confirm delivery of the package on the electronic data file (col. 14, lines 59-67). Delfer further teaches the data file is a billing manifest as set forth above with respect to claim 36.

28. As per claim 40, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the system of claim 39 as described above. Morimoto further teaches the initial carrier computer system is configured to obtain from the shipper computer system a compilation of package information data on a plurality of packages (col. 10, lines 45-46) and is further configured to periodically compare the package information data to the compilation of package information data to confirm receipt of the package information data from the shipper computer system (col. 13, lines 9-15).

29. As per claim 41, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the system of claim 40 as described above. Morimoto further teaches the initial carrier computer system is configured to electronically transmit at least one of the package information data, the tracking data and the electronic billing manifest to the shipper computer system or a consignee computer system (col. 11, lines 12-17).

30. As per claim 42, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the system of claim 37 as described above. Morimoto further teaches the initial carrier computer system is further configured to generate cost of shipment data, including costs associated with delivery of the package by one or more participating carriers (col. 10, lines 36-39), generating an electronic invoice including the cost of shipment data and transmitting the electronic invoice to the shipper computer (col. 10, line 61 - col. 11, line 3; Fig. 4).

31. As per claim 43, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the system of claim 42 as described above. Morimoto further teaches the cost of shipment data includes a cost of delivery to the intermediate location by the initial carrier and a cost of delivery to the consignee location by the subsequent carrier (col. 10, lines 39-45, 61-63).

32. As per claim 50, Morimoto teaches the method of claim 48 as described above. Morimoto further teaches constructing a data file by correlating, using the initial carrier tracking number, the package information data with the tracking data indicating detection of the initial carrier tracking number at the intermediate location (col. 11, lines 24-29; Fig. 4). Morimoto does not teach that the data file is a billing manifest; which is taught by Delfer (col. 11, lines 13-20). Since each individual element and its function are shown in the prior art, albeit shown in separate references, the difference between the claimed subject matter and the prior art rests not on any individual element or function but in the very combination itself—that is, in the substitution of the billing manifests in Delfer for the data files used in Morimoto. Both elements share similar purposes and characteristics. It would have been prima facie obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to incorporate billing manifests because it is merely the simple substitution of one known element for another that could be implemented through routine engineering producing predictable results.

33. As per claim 51, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the method of claim 50 as described above. Morimoto further teaches obtaining the package information data also includes obtaining a subsequent carrier tracking number and further comprising obtaining tracking data indicating detection of the subsequent carrier tracking number at

the consignee address using a scanning device of the subsequent carrier physical delivery system (col. 11, lines 24-27, Fig. 4, col. 15, lines 10-15).

34. As per claim 52, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the method of claim 51 as described above. Morimoto further teaches constructing the data file includes correlating, using the subsequent carrier tracking number, the package information with the tracking data indicating detection of the subsequent carrier tracking number at the consignee address (col. 14, lines 59-67). Delfer further teaches the data file is a billing manifest as set forth above with respect to claim 50.

35. As per claim 53, Morimoto teaches the method of claim 50 as described above. Morimoto further teaches comparing the electronic data file with the tracking data indicating detection of the subsequent carrier tracking number at the consignee address to confirm delivery of the package on the electronic data file (col. 14, lines 59-67). Delfer further teaches the data file is a billing manifest as set forth above with respect to claim 50.

36. As per claim 57, Morimoto teaches the product of claim 56 as described above. Morimoto further teaches a seventh executable code portion for constructing a data file by correlating, using the initial carrier tracking number, the package information data with the tracking data indicating detection of the initial carrier tracking number at the intermediate location (col. 11, lines 24-29; Fig. 4). Morimoto does not teach that the data file is a billing manifest; which is taught by Delfer (col. 11, lines 13-20). Since each individual element and its function are shown in the prior art, albeit shown in separate references, the difference between the claimed subject matter and the prior art rests not on any individual element or function but in the very combination itself—that is, in the substitution of the billing manifests in Delfer for the data files used in Morimoto. Both elements share similar purposes and characteristics. It would have been prima facie obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to incorporate billing manifests because it is merely the simple substitution of one known element for

another that could be implemented through routine engineering producing predictable results.

37. As per claim 58, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the product of claim 57 as described above. Morimoto further teaches an eighth executable code portion for obtaining a subsequent carrier tracking number as part of the package information data and obtaining tracking data indicating detection of the subsequent carrier tracking number at the consignee address using a scanning device of a subsequent carrier physical delivery system (col. 11, lines 24-27, Fig. 4, col. 15, lines 10-15).

38. As per claim 59, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the product of claim 58 as described above. Morimoto further teaches the seventh executable code portion is further for correlating, using the subsequent carrier tracking number, the package information data with the tracking data indicating detection of the subsequent carrier tracking number at the consignee address (col. 14, lines 59-67).

39. As per claim 60, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the product of claim 59 as described above. Morimoto further teaches a ninth executable code portion for comparing the electronic data file with the tracking data indicating detection of the subsequent carrier tracking number at the consignee address to confirm delivery of the package on the electronic billing manifest (col. 14, lines 59-67). Delfer further teaches the data file is a billing manifest as set forth above with respect to claim 57.

40. Claims 44 and 45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Morimoto in view of Delfer, III as applied to claim 43 above, further in view of Thiel, U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2002/0077847 (Reference B of the attached PTO-892) and Himmelstein, U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2002/0032643 (Reference C of the attached PTO-892).

41. As per claim 44, Morimoto in view of Delfer teaches the system of claim 43 as described above. Morimoto in view of Delfer does not explicitly teach the initial carrier computer system is configured to control receipt of funds from the shipper computer system for payment of the invoice, debiting an amount of the funds for shipment services provided by the initial carrier; which are taught by Thiel (¶¶ 0058-59, 82). It

would have been prima facie obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to incorporate the above teachings of Thiel because this is merely a combination of old elements. In the combination each element would have served the same purpose as it did separately, and one skilled in the art would have recognized that the combination could be implemented through routine engineering producing predictable results. Morimoto in view of Delfer does not teach depositing a remaining amount of the funds in an escrow account; which is taught by Himmelstein (¶ 0119). It would have been prima facie obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to incorporate the above teachings of Himmelstein because this as well is merely a combination of old elements that would produce only predictable results.

42. As per claim 45, Morimoto in view of Delfer, Thiel, and Himmelstein teaches the system of claim 44 as described above. Thiel further teaches the subsequent carrier computer system is electronically connected to the account and is configured to withdraw funds from the account for shipping services provided by the subsequent carrier (¶ 0126) and is also configured to compare the amount of the funds debited by the initial carrier to the electronic billing manifest (¶¶ 0128-29). Himmelstein further teaches the account is an escrow account (¶ 0119). It would have been prima facie obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to incorporate the elements for the same reasons set forth above with respect to claim 44.

Conclusion

43. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Wade, U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2003/0009351 (Reference D of the attached PTO-892) teaches a method that enables a carrier of a mailpiece, such as a national postal service, to track a mailpiece as it passes from the control of a first carrier to the control of another, second carrier. Williams, et al., U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2002/0032573 (Reference E of the attached PTO-892) teaches a plurality of Enterprises with a single online user interface with which the Enterprise can provide Enterprise Shippers, shipping origination users and shipping intermediary users with an automated

parcel management system for a plurality of supported Carriers for a plurality of services.

44. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DANIEL P. VETTER whose telephone number is (571)270-1366. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 8am to 6pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on (571) 272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/JOHN W HAYES/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3628